

# FLIGHT JACKET

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Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

October 22, 2004

## 'Sound of Freedom' entertains worldwide audience



Sean Tucker throws on the smoke as he practices an upside down flying technique for his aerobatic performance in his Oracle 'Challenger' Oct. 14. Tucker performed Oct. 15-18 at the Miramar Air Show. Photo by Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Hundreds of thousands of visitors flocked from all over the globe to witness the 2004 Miramar Air Show held here Oct. 15-17.

The air show, appropriately themed "Thunder over Miramar: The Sound of Freedom," kept guests and base

personnel entertained for hours with civilian and military static displays, vendor booths and aerial and ground performances.

Although the U.S. Navy Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Squadron headlined the event, a great number of military and civilian performers kept the crowds pumped up all three days of the air show.

The world's largest transformer, the Robosaurus, a

40-foot, fire-breathing transformer, was a huge crowd pleaser rolling up and down the flight line eating cars.

"I loved the giant dinosaur. It was my favorite thing at the Air Show," said 10-year-old Michael Hudspeth.

Kids and adults also enjoyed the Marine Air Ground Task Force demonstration, which thrilled spectators with displays of close air support, armor, artillery and infantry forces.

During the twilight show, the MAGTF demonstration fired the crowd up with pyrotechnics, explosions and the "Great Wall of Fire," which made the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest wall of fire at the 2000 Miramar Air Show.

Civilian performers also entertained the crowds during the weekend. Despite the tragic crash and death of civilian pilot Sean deRosier during the first day of the air show, the event prevailed.

"Sean, in any event, would have wanted to continue this air show, and that is what we're going to do," said Brig. Gen. Carl B. Jensen, commanding general, MCAS Miramar, shortly following Friday's accident.

Jensen dedicated Saturday's air show performances to deRosier.

The air show experienced another setback Sunday with a sudden morning downpour. But despite the weather conditions, the show went on.

See **SHOW**, page 7



Rescue workers place Sean deRosier, civilian aerobatic pilot, onto a Marine Corps Air Station Yuma Search and Rescue helicopter Oct. 15 during the Miramar Air Show. A medical evacuation flight was ready for transport within minutes after the crash. Rescue pilots flew deRosier to Scripps Memorial hospital where he was later pronounced dead. Photo by Staff Sgt. Chad McMeen

## Miramar responds to air show tragedy

Compiled by MCAS Miramar Public Affairs

Emergency crews aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar responded to a civilian performance aircraft crash at approximately 10:15 a.m. Oct. 15 near the flight line here. The aircraft crashed while performing scheduled aerobatic maneuvers at the 2004 Miramar Air Show, killing the pilot.

Sean deRosier, pilot of the custom-built "Cabo Wabo SkyRocker" aircraft, was immediately evacuated to the Scripps Memo-

rial Hospital in La Jolla, Calif., by an MCAS Yuma Search and Rescue helicopter.

Brig. Gen. Carl B. Jensen, commanding general, MCAS Miramar, immediately suspended flight operations following the accident. Jensen resumed flight operations approximately two hours later.

"Sean, in any event, would have wanted to continue this air show, and that is what we're going to do. That's what professionals do," Jensen said.

The crash caused no injuries on the ground and the cause is under investigation.

## Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



66°/52°  
Today



68°/53°  
Saturday



66°/53°  
Sunday

**Fastest gun  
proves worth  
in Iraq  
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**First responders  
keep air show  
safe  
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# Political belligerence: Protect it, don't practice it

Editorial by 2nd Lt. Paul L. Croom, II

MCAS Miramar Public Affairs Officer

Those of us who have earned the right to wear the uniform of the armed forces of the United States do indeed sacrifice much. We spend weeks, months and sometimes years away from our families. We endure sleepless days and nights absent virtually all creature comforts. We submit ourselves to a highly exacting legal system. We commit ourselves to an occupation that is not only a paycheck, but a lifestyle. We place ourselves in mortal and many times imminent danger, and though we are of the same ilk as our civilian brethren, to an extent, we do indeed endure a diminished right to free speech. We do this without reservation and as a 100-percent volunteer force. We forfeit our rights in order to defend those of our countrymen and I, for one, am honored and humbled to do so.

As servicemembers, whether U.S. citizens or not, we also experience necessary limitations on our political expression—limitations that are vital to unit solidarity and the integrity of the chain of command. While servicemembers are encouraged to be politically cognizant and active, we must always keep in mind that our freedom of speech is *never* more important than mission accomplishment. Implicit in this concept is that we must remain ever-ready for humanitarian assistance operations, full-scale war and

the entire spectrum of operations in between. We must not compromise this crucial status by engaging in political activities that undermine good order and discipline, and are prejudicial to unit efficiency and effectiveness.

Department of Defense Directive 1344.10, Political Activities by Members of Armed Forces on Active Duty, is specific instruction that details limitations on political activities by which we, as servicemembers, must abide. It states that servicemembers must avoid any outside activities that are prejudicial to the performance of military duties or are likely to bring discredit upon the armed forces.

While routine discussions regarding current world events are permitted, forceful advocacy of a particular political cause, or attempts to unduly influence a particular election are prohibited. Accordingly, solicitation of votes for a candidate or issue is improper political activity, as is publicly berating an individual for holding a contrary or different opinion on an issue or cause. The

directive also states that attending political rallies and functions while in uniform or expressing personal political views as official Department of Defense or Marine Corps positions is improper behavior. Since it may bring discredit upon the Marine Corps and is detrimental to unit cohesiveness and esprit, conduct of this nature is strictly prohibited.

See **ACTIVITY**, page 10

## Your political activity

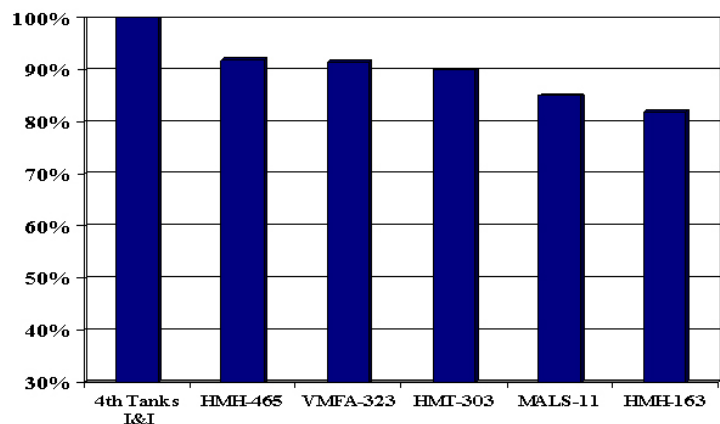
### Permitted Activities:

- ✓ voting
- ✓ expressing personal opinion on political issues or candidates
- ✓ attending political rallies while not in uniform
- ✓ discussing personal views on issues or candidates with others.
- ✓ contributing to political organizations

### Prohibited Activities:

- X attending political events, activities, rallies, etc. in uniform or while on duty
- X soliciting political contributions from servicemembers
- X expressing personal views on an issue as an official Department of Defense or Marine Corps position
- X berating others with differing positions on an issue.

## Miramar CFC Top Performers



The chart to the left displays the current top six participating units aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in the Combined Federal Campaign.

The CFC is an outlet for servicemembers to donate money to a wide array of charities and non-profit organizations. For more information on the CFC, or to donate, see your unit's CFC coordinator.



## Is this your Malibu?

The above vehicle is marked for impound by the Provost Marshal's Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office lot. For more information, contact 577-1276 or 577-4150.

## MIRAMARKS

“How can political arguments in the workplace undermine readiness?”



**PVT. MILES J. SINGLEY**

Helicopter Mechanic  
MAG-16

“I don't see how political debates can cause problems. Everyone has their own opinion and it is up to them to decide who they want to vote for.”

**LANCE CPL. DILSON TEIXEIRA**  
Ordnance Technician  
VMA-232

“It doesn't matter who you want to vote for and I don't think it is controversial to talk about the elections.”



**LANCE CPL. BILLRAY POUNDS**  
Firefighter  
ARFF

“It's just conversation, but when arguments do arise, they should be continued outside of work.”



## FLIGHT JACKET

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Commanding General  
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



**BRIG. GEN. CARL B. JENSEN**  
Commander MCABWA  
Commanding General  
MCAS Miramar

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**1st Lt. Albert G. Eskalis**  
Public Affairs Deputy Director  
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Public Affairs Officer  
**2nd Lt. Paul L. Croom II**  
Public Affairs Officer  
**Gunnery Sgt. Barry L. Pawelek**  
Public Affairs Chief  
**Staff Sgt. Chad McMeen**  
Internal Chief  
**Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro**  
Layout and Design  
Combat Correspondents  
**Staff Sgt. Maria C. Brookman**

**Sgt. C. Nuntavong**  
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**Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte**  
**Cpl. Paul Leicht**

# Teamwork produces Fastest Gun in the West

Story by Cpl. Jan Bender

*1st Marine Division Combat Correspondent*

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq - They have earned the title of “Fastest Gun in the West.” The west end of Camp Fallujah, Iraq, that is.

For the nine Marines who operate Gun 5, Battery M, 4th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, from Chattanooga, Tenn., being the best is all about teamwork.



The Marines of Gun 5, Battery M, 4th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, work quickly to load the first round of a fire mission. Each Marine has different responsibilities as they work as a team to fire. They must ensure their M-198, 155mm, medium howitzer is set at the right direction and elevation, with the proper round and charge loaded before the breech is closed. Then the lanyard is pulled and the round is fired. *Photo by Cpl. Jan Bender*

The Marines, part of Camp Fallujah’s Counter Battery Artillery, earned their title through an ongoing competition in the battery, setting themselves apart from the other five guns by preparing a counter-battery mission in record time.

The Marines have reason to talk. They are able to maneuver their more than 15,000 pound M-198, 155mm, medium howitzer through 360 degrees, set the elevation, load a 100-pound round, determine the correct charge and stand ready for the command to fire in just under 57 seconds.

“Ever since I joined, everything in the Corps has been a competition. It’s all about pride,” said Lance Cpl. Greg Kuehn, 23, a native of Hickson, Tenn., and a cannoneer with Gun 5. “We work hard to be the fastest gun, just so we can say we’re the best.”

With only a few seconds difference between each gun’s finish time the competition is tight, but the Marines say that’s what makes it fun.

“We try to beat everybody in whatever we do,” said Staff Sgt. Norman Dale Head, the Gun 5 section chief. “And it snowballs into a competitive spirit that helps pass the time out here.”

The battery’s six guns are in charge of providing counter-battery fire for several coalition installations in the area. Those installations receive rocket and mortar fire from anti-Iraqi forces regularly, so Marines must remain proficient with their skills.

Camp Fallujah’s counter-battery radar tracks the projectiles from the point of origin and relays this information to the Fire Direction Center. Marines at the FDC run the numbers through a series of equations and contacts the Marines on the gun line, supplying them with a fire mission that will destroy the threat.

However, the anti-Iraqi forces have evolved their tactics, trying to evade the battery’s counter fire by firing rockets or mortars from the back of trucks or rigging the projectiles with timing devices. The cannoneers know they have to make every second count.

“One thing I’ve tried to instill in my Marines from the beginning is that every step that we take, fast or slow, is directly related to someone else,” said Sgt. Eric J. Radich, assistant gunner, Gun 5, Battery M. “If we move slow, (our counter fire) gets there slow. In many ways our job acts as a life saver.”

The battery is also responsible for supporting any coalition ground forces operating within their range of fire. These Marines respond with high explosive, illumination or smoke rounds to destroy objectives or mark targets for air support.

“The infantry troops can rely on us. They know the round is coming in accurately and on time,” said Sgt. Guy Yale, ammo chief, Gun 5, Battery M. “So in the end the little competitive games turn out to be positive for everybody.”

The entire battery was activated on July 15 and spent two months training at Ma-

rine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., before deploying to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. They relieved the Marines of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Sept. 4.

This is the first time the Marines from Tennessee have been activated since November of 1990, when they were brought on active duty in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Head, who was a lance corporal with the battery during Desert Storm, said this may be a different war, but the young Marines are still the same. “They are constantly working hard out here and doing one hell of a job.”

And for the younger Marines deploying for their first time, there is no place they’d rather be.

“We are all motivated to be out here,” said Cpl. Kevin Bovina, gunner, Gun 5, Battery M. “This is what I joined the Corps to do I’m glad to finally be able to do it.”

The Marines of Gun Five have only been in Iraq for one month of their expected seven-month tour, but they have no doubts that the title of “Fastest Gun in the West” will remain in their hands. They believe this achievement is a reflection of good teamwork.

“We’ve got a good mix of Marines on this gun,” said Radich. “We may not have all the characters out of the battery or the biggest and strongest guys, but we all work together, pull our own weight and it just seems to work.”



The various powder charges that the Marines of Gun 5, Battery M, 4th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, use during their missions sit ready in individual canisters in a bunker near their gun. *Photo by Cpl. Jan Bender*

# Low-altitude gunners host training ranges in Iraq

Story by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri

*3rd MAW Combat Correspondent*

AL ASAD, Iraq - With numerous units based here, the need arose for adequate training areas. The 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing has taken responsibility for controlling and maintaining the weapons ranges for all the units aboard Al Asad.

Especially while in a war zone, a high standard of excellence is required of Marines in every aspect of operation.

In order to meet these requirements, it's imperative there are proper facilities to conduct the various types of training necessary to get the job done.

Operated by the Marines of 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion, currently serving in Security Battalion, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd MAW, Al Asad's Range Operations and Training has a large area of operations, with combat courses that encompass a wide variety of training.

Covering everything from small arms fire to full-scale bombing runs, range control Marines ensure the training is conducted safely and efficiently.

"We do a lot of training out here," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Ronnie M. Mejia, operations chief, Range Operations and Training. "Since taking over Sept. 1, we've trained almost 5,000 Marines."

According to Mejia, running the weapons ranges is more than just scheduling times and organizing units.

"We give safety briefs for the ranges we run, place targets and clean up the ranges," he said. "We give classes about all factors of weapons and combat."

Nicknamed "Angels of Death," the range control Marines have full confidence in their abilities to do their job.

"We're good at what we do," said 26-year-old Chicago native Sgt. Jesus E. Villegas, gunner, Range Operations and Training. "We're always on time and always motivated."

Having more than a dozen mission-specific ranges available for weapons such as pistols, rifles, heavy machine guns, various rocket launchers, grenades and artillery gives the range control Marines enough work to keep them busy.

"We also try to give (units) as much time as necessary so they can prepare for their missions," said Mejia. "They have priority."

Along with organizing ranges for the units on base, Range Operations and Training also hosts ranges for the Iraqi police force and border patrol.

"We're training the Iraqi boarder patrol (on) how to fire their weapons, do squad rushes and engage targets on the move," said Sgt. Heath A. Fernald, instructor,

2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion, currently serving with the 1st Marine Division, during a recent training session held at the fire and maneuver range here.

Also located on base is a range used specifically for grenade training. The Marines run through a course with various barriers and throw grenades while their fellow Marines provide cover fire with live ammunition.

With all of these tasks, it's the range control personnel who don't often get a chance to participate in the training themselves.

"We're always conducting training for other units," said Sgt. Richard L. Swihart III, gunner, Range Operations and Training. "As a result, we hardly ever get a

chance to do any training.

"Our mission is (to) support the other units on base," added Swihart. "Our personal training comes second."

However, that doesn't mean they don't train at all. Occasionally, the range control Marines get the opportunity to mix business with pleasure.

"Every once in a while, we'll go out and shoot weapons with another unit," said Villegas. "Firing a machine gun and throwing grenades is pretty motivating."

**"Since taking over Sept. 1, we've trained almost 5,000 Marines."**

**Master Gunnery Sgt. Ronnie M. Mejia**  
**Operations Chief**



**Sgt. Henock S. Hall, gunner, 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, tosses a grenade at a range aboard Al Asad, Iraq, Oct. 2. The ranges aboard the air base are controlled and maintained by the 4th LAAD Marines, who provide support for units utilizing weapons ranging from small arms to rockets. Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri**



**Marines from Regimental Combat Team 7, 1st Marine Division, conduct live-fire and grenade training at one of the multiple weapons ranges at Al Asad, Iraq, Oct. 2. The ranges aboard the air base are controlled and maintained by the Marines of 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri**

# First responders keep air show safe for visitors

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

First responders perform their jobs and prepare for urgent situations on a daily basis, but sometimes they encounter a few surprises along the way.

Though the 2004 Miramar Air Show experienced everything from heat casualties and drug busts to an aircraft crash, first responders were on call for every emergency.

To ensure they were well prepared, first responders took the necessary safety precautions prior to and during the air show to protect guests and personnel on base.

According to 1st Lt. Katherine Hendricks, operations officer, Provost Marshal's Office, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, a thorough security plan was crucial during the air show because the station opened its gates and assets to thousands of strangers.

"I am confident in the preparedness of all our security sections," Hendricks said before the air show began. "They know what they're doing and everyone knows what their individual mission is."

Most Marines underwent training before the event, where they learned additional information about their specific line of work during the air show. Jobs ranged from flight line security to random vehicle inspections and patrolling.

"I learned about the patrol zones, my areas of responsibility and possible threats that we could encounter at the air show," said Cpl. Jeremy B. Willet, traffic court clerk, PMO. "It is important to prepare because every year there are new aspects to the air show and we need to be ready."

Military first responders also coordinated with civilian organizations like the San Diego County Sheriff's Department prior to the air show.

"We're basically an insurance policy in case of an emergency," said Jess Mauk, communicator, Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, San Diego County Sheriff's Department. "We are the back up communications and we will call the civilian agencies, along with the military police in the event of a crisis."

The first responders were ready to take action when an emergency occurred during the first day of the air show.

Civilian pilot Sean deRosier crashed his aircraft during his morning performance. Immediately following the event, the Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting "hot spot" crew notified ARFF dispatchers.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Marines secured the crash site on the flight line until ARFF arrived on scene.

Along with Yuma Search and Rescue, medical and PMO first responders were also on scene to transport deRosier to the hospital.

According to Gunnery Sgt. Adrian L. Church, crash chief, ARFF, all of the first responders worked well together to ensure the situation was taken care of in a safe and timely manner.

"We train for these types of events all of the time," said Church. "In a life or death situation, you need to be prepared."

Through various security measures, first responders like PMO ensured everyone on base was protected. Random vehicle inspections were conducted at the gate and 100 percent of the vehicles coming onto the flight line were examined.

Everyone coming onto the flight line also went through metal detectors and was searched

for contraband like alcohol, knives and other weapons.

In case air show spectators were injured at the event, medical personnel were on call for any emergency.

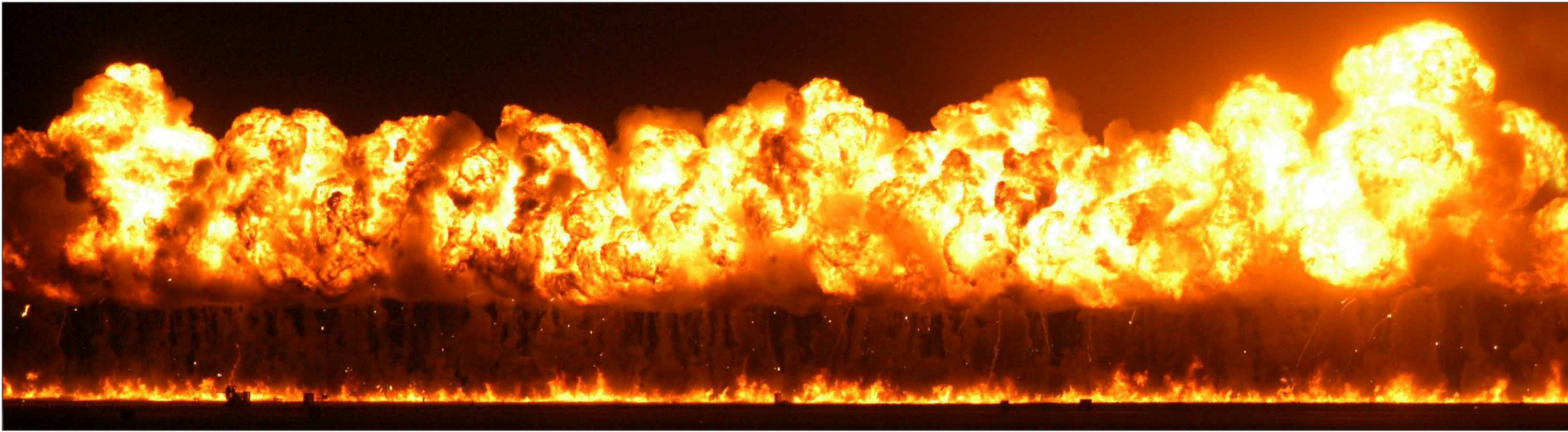
Inside and outside the flight line, PMO's K-9 unit was also on patrol, looking for any suspicious activities.

Since the air show attracted hundreds of thousands of people and had significant media exposure, the station was at risk for terrorist attacks. Accordingly, PMO was on the prowl looking for anything out of the ordinary.

"Security is highly important at events like the air show," said Sgt. Leron Lawrence, physical security specialist, PMO. "It is essential to be on the alert for everybody's safety."



**A Marine watches the crowd at the 2004 Miramar Air Show at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Oct. 17. Marines were located throughout the air show to ensure that everyone on base was kept safe during the event. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones**



The 2,000-feet long Great Wall of Fire lights up the night sky during the twilight show Oct. 16 at the 2004 Miramar Air Show. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Nicholous Radloff*

# Goodness gracious, Great Wall of Fire

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

*MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent*

The Great Wall of Fire ignited during the 2000 Miramar Air Show made the Guinness Book of World Records for “The Longest Wall of Fire.” That night, it measured 2,500 feet, and dazzled hundreds of thousands of spectators.

Although this year the record-breaking inferno only measured 2,000 feet, it continued to have an explosive effect on audiences during the twilight show Oct. 16.

David Marinelli, an air show spectator, said the wall of fire was the highlight of the evening show, which also included a hot-air balloon glow, a mechanical fire-breathing “Robosaurus” and a colossal fireworks display.

Planning for the Great Wall of Fire began in January when Miramar’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal team ordered materials such as detonation cords, gasoline,

explosives and other material for the display.

The Marines set up for Saturday’s finale days in advance to ensure the audience would be amazed another year.

“We were mainly setting up for the Marine Air Ground Task Force demonstration,” said Master Sgt. Michael McClung, noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. “We used the same 800-foot electric wire harness for the Great Wall of Fire that we used for the MAGTF explosions.”

According to McClung, along with taking other precautions to make the Great Wall of Fire safe for audience members, EOD also set up more than 3,500 sandbags to protect the ground from explosive damages prior to the detonation.

“I was really impressed with the whole build up to the Great Wall of Fire,” said Marinelli. “I thought the first few

explosions were big enough, but the finale was just amazing.”

The MAGTF demonstration included more than 45 small detonations to build-up the crowd’s enthusiasm. Then, a smaller, 1,000-foot wall was ignited to really fire the crowd up before igniting the Great Wall of Fire.

“We wanted to tease the crowd with simulated bombs, fireworks and other pyrotechnics before we ignited the Great Wall of Fire to get them excited,” said Capt. Christopher Miller, officer-in-charge, EOD, H&HS. “The final explosion was the climax.”

The world record set years ago by Miramar’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal team has never been broken, but crowds continue to flock to the air show each year to see the luminous display.

“It felt gratifying to know that the crowd enjoyed the experience,” said Miller. “Even though the explosion was frivolous, it showed the audience the power of the explosions and the good that we can do.”



A Marine visits with Miramar Air Show attendees Oct. 16 at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. The air show gave servicemembers and civilians an opportunity to come together in support of America. Photo by Staff Sgt. Chad McMeen

# Air show invokes pride in American citizens

Story by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The theme for this year’s Miramar Air Show, “Thunder Over Miramar: The Sound of Freedom,” pinpointed a feeling that swooped through the crowd with every jet that shot up into the sky.

American pride was on banners, souvenir flags, patriotic dolls and gleaming from a crowd of smiling faces looking skyward.

Tom M. Smith, owner of a MiG-15 jet, showed off his aircraft to the air show

spectators throughout the weekend.

Looking up at a jet, he said “It’s an exciting sound. To see the technology and everything that goes into these (jets) today is fascinating and exciting.”

In addition to showing off his aircraft, the Chico, Calif., native has visited air shows since 1997 to support American troops.

“I came to mingle with all of the military guys who are fighting for us,” Smith said. “Being here and seeing what they do is a good reminder of who is taking care of America.”

By attending air shows, Smith has been able to share experiences with American pilots that flew to defend the nation.

“I’ve had an opportunity to talk to (pilots) who flew fighting us and those who flew fighting for us,” Smith added. “It’s very interesting talking to both sides 50 years later.”

Ron L. Jermyn, an air show spectator, watched the show with his son Chad, an air show enthusiast that hopes one day to fly for the Air Force.

Ron had never been to a military base before coming here Saturday for the air show.

“It gave me a better sense of what’s here and how it works. I think (the financial strength to be able to do this and have such a variety of aircraft) gives you a sense of the power of America. It’s amazing,” Ron said.

Chad said “the air show was great, but next year I’d like to see the Air Force’s Raptor F-22 fighter jet.”

Many people came to tour the static display aircraft, relive old memories or watch the performers fly, but one spectator comes every year to find lost heroes.

Maria E. Wilhelm, former writer for “People Magazine,” wrote a story during the Gulf War about her time attached to an AV-8B Harrier II squadron in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

“My story affected millions of people, and (the Marines’) incredible commitment, discipline and cohesiveness affected me,” she said. “They have had a lasting impact on me.”

The pride associated with Marines and the Miramar Air Show is just one of the strengths that brings Americans together as a nation.

## SHOW continued from page 1

Merchants still set up their tents to sell food and merchandise to the public throughout the flight line. Vendors and units also set up booths to promote their products to the throng of visitors who still decided to come out.

According to Ed Downum, Miramar Air Show coordinator, Marine Corps Community Services, the proceeds from the food, beverage and novelty sales, booth fees and premium seating go to MCCS, who will use the money to fund programs and facilities for servicemembers and their families.

“The air show is a great event and the community loves it,” Downum said. “Now that this show is over, we are going to start planning for next year’s air show.”

Overall, visitors and base personnel who attended the air show had an enjoyable time.

“I’m glad that we opened up our base so civilians can experience this event, and I am glad that I had the opportunity to come out to the air show,” said Pfc. David Maxim, field wireman, Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. “I am definitely coming back next year.”

# Civilian skills help Marines adapt in Iraqi war zone

Story by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri

3rd MAW Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD, Iraq - On the outskirts of the air base here lays an old Ammunition Supply Point used by the former Iraqi armed forces.

Nicknamed “Flea,” the ASP now houses captured and uncovered ordnance slated to be destroyed as soon as possible.

Responsible for guarding ASP Flea are reservists from Battery K, 4th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, a reserve artillery unit from Alabama.

Currently, they are augmenting Security Battalion, 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

“We have a lot of support (military occupational specialties) in our unit that are now filling a security role,” said Maj. Mike H. Ledbetter, commanding officer, Battery K. “It was a challenge that we were ready to take on.”

An American Airlines pilot from Dallas, Ledbetter is currently serving his second deployment in the Middle East, during the first of which he flew F/A-18 Hornets.

“I’m a pilot by trade, so being a (commanding officer) for an artillery unit isn’t my normal job,” said the 37-year-old. “But I’m glad I have had the

honor of working with these Marines.”

Making the change from artillery to security duties isn’t normally a painless process. However, the reserve unit was able to make the switch effortlessly due to the wealth of talented personnel within its ranks.

“Being a reserve unit actually made the transition very easy,” said Ledbetter. “Everyone was able to use their civilian skills to help make it all go smooth.”

For example, civilian carpenters, electricians, plumbers, firefighters and policeman were able to utilize their civilian expertise for the mission at hand.

“I’ve been really impressed at how well the Marines have adapted,” said Ledbetter. “We couldn’t have done any of this as easily as we did if it weren’t for their contribution.”

After arriving at ASP Flea, Battery K immediately assumed control of more than 300 tons of munitions.

“Every bunker was filled to the top with all different (kinds) of bombs,” said Ledbetter. “As a result, there was only one bunker we could sleep in.”

With large amounts of ordnance being destroyed each day, a few of the weapons bunkers eventually became available as billeting areas.

“We cleaned out a lot of the bunkers and started to use them as barracks,” said Ledbetter. “Our electricians wired them



**Manning a heavy machine gun, Pvt. Derrick D. Maull, food services specialist, Battery K, Security Battalion, 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, guards the entrance to Ammunition Supply Point “Flea” located outside Al Asad, Iraq, Oct. 7. After effectively making the transition from their normal artillery duties, the reservists of Battery K are responsible for guarding more than 300 tons of unexploded ordnance. Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri**

for lighting and hooked up air conditioning.”

Working with air conditioning as a civilian, Gunnery Sgt. Tom E. Clements, field artillery cannoneer, Battery K, was able to use his technical skills to install air conditioners for many of the bunkers his Marines live in, a feat indicative of the spectrum of talents within the detachment.

“We have such a variety of skills throughout the unit,” said Clements. “Everyone here has something to add.”

“I’m a licensed electrician in my civilian job,” remarked Staff Sgt. David B. King, field artillery cannoneer, Battery K. “I’ve been able to use my skills out here a lot more than I expected.”

Owning a business with his father, King has had a lot of experience working with electricity and plumbing, which allows ASP Flea to be virtually self-sufficient.

“Being able to do things on our own out here means that we don’t have to wait if we need something done or if something breaks down,” King said. “We can usually take care of the problem without having to rely on someone else.”

Along with guarding ordnance, the Marines of ASP Flea are also responsible for supervising the loading of railway missions, as well as serving as a traffic control point for convoys traveling to Al Asad from places like Fallujah and Ramadi, Iraq.



**Manning a machine gun mounted on a Humvee, Lance Cpl. Clint E. Smith, motor vehicle operator, Battery K, Security Battalion, 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, stays alert at Ammunition Supply Point “Flea” located outside Al Asad, Iraq, Oct. 7. The Alabama reservists of Battery K are responsible for guarding more than 300 tons of unexploded ordnance waiting to be destroyed. Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri**

“We have dozens of vehicles coming through daily,” said Ledbetter. “We do an initial check before they’re allowed to get any closer to Al Asad.”

Because they are located outside of the air base, ASP Flea Marines don’t get to enjoy a lot of the amenities available to Marines aboard the installation, but they are constantly making strides to upgrade their quality of life.

“We’re working on a (recreation) room to build morale,” said Clements. “Because our guys stand watch all day, boredom can be the biggest morale killer. The key is to keep busy.”

# ‘Suck it up’ mentality leads to unsafe exercise

Story by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Pain is just weakness leaving the body- or is it? This popular Marine Corps saying can lead to short-term physical triumphs, like better physical fitness test scores, but may also lead to long-term injuries.

“I’ve never met a Marine that would say, ‘Stop! You might twist your ankle.’ It just isn’t in their nature to worry about it,” said Chief Petty Officer Clifford L. Ryan, aerospace medicine technician, Branch Medical Clinic, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

Ryan says Marines usually don’t come into the BMC while the injury is still fresh. “I’ll get an answer like, ‘I hurt it three days ago.’ They don’t usually come in right away, and that can lead to more serious injuries,” said the Morgantown, W.Va., native.

“Marines with knee injuries continue to play football or soccer, and a strain becomes a ligament tear, or injury to the joint. An injury usually gets much worse before it gets better,” Ryan said. “If they wait too long, they can end up with stress fractures which take much longer to heal.”

According to Ryan, a Marine may put off going to a doctor to maintain full-duty status in order to continue to train with the unit. However, instead of missing a small portion of training during the initial healing process, the Marine only ends up aggravating the injury that may then take several months to heal.

“I’m not saying run to medical for every little ache and pain, but if you have an injury, get it evaluated,” cautioned Ryan.

Ryan recently returned from Iraq where he heard a lot of comments like, “I can’t stop to take care of it right now because we are busy.”

Lance Cpl. Joel Padron, aviation technician, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, Marine

Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, doesn’t like to go to medical right away.

“I pulled a muscle in my shoulder because I didn’t stretch before doing pull-ups. I regret that. I’ve (also) seen people hide injuries. There’s a lot of the, ‘It will go away eventually, (or) I’ll walk it off’ mentality. When all else fails, take Motrin,” he said, laughing.

Marines who are too stubborn may avoid seeking help for too long. “You could end up being found not physically fit to remain on active duty by the time you finally have to come in,” said Ryan, about stubborn Marines’ iron will to stay out of the BMC.

“Everyone should seek to be physically fit as part of a Marine lifestyle, but don’t injure yourself in the process and end up with a disability,” said Ryan.

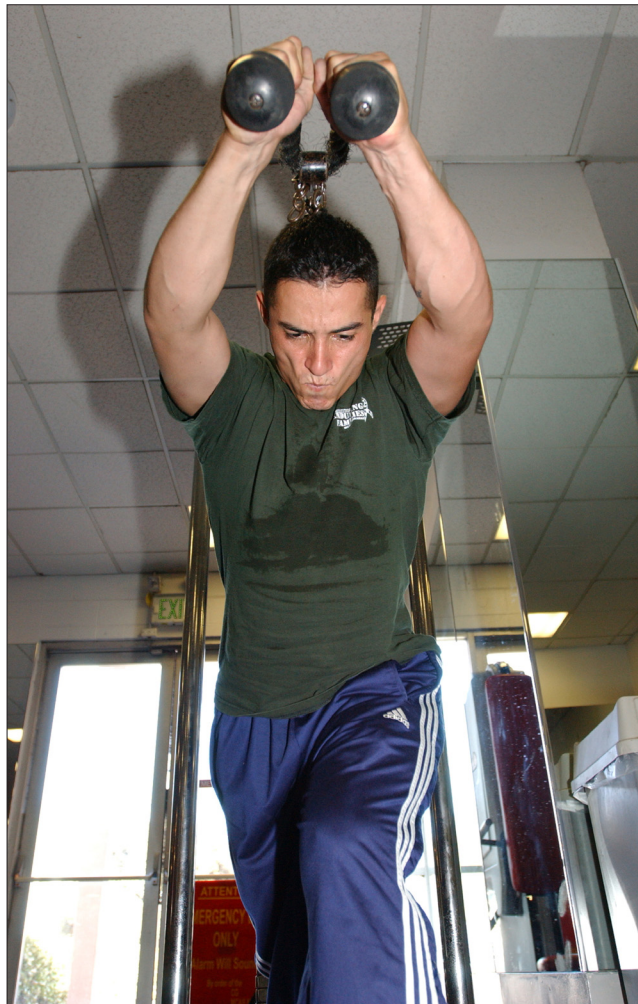
Some of Ryan’s advice for preventing injury include replacing running shoes at least every six months, warming up, stretching, and cooling down during every workout and giving each muscle time to recuperate between workout sessions.

“There is still a lot of the old mentality that the only way to be physically fit is to run 100 miles a day for 100 days,” joked Ryan. “I would go see one of the personal trainers they have at the gym instead.”

“They have aerobics, yoga, spin classes, and all kinds of fitness programs for free,” added Ryan.

“Everyday, I see a Marine trying to do a lateral pull-down (on a weight machine) behind the neck. It’s dangerous. It must be done up front towards the chest. There are always Marines trying to impress each other, and they end up trying to lift too much weight without spotters. It’s an easy way to hurt yourself,” said Janis C. Rodriguez, fitness coordinator, Semper Fit Division, Marine Corps Community Services, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

In addition to training Marines safely, the trainers



**Lance Cpl. Joel Padron, aviation technician, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, lifts weights without a spotter at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Oct. 7. He believes in taking medicine and trying to work through an injury before seeking medical attention. *Photo by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira***

See **EXERCISE**, page 10

# Miramar Air Show logistical support promotes basewide collaboration

Story by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

To the spectators, the 2004 Miramar Air Show may have been a weekend of spectacular sights, sounds and smells, but to the servicemembers and civilians who made it possible, it was one very elaborate long-term collaboration.

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar opened its gates to hundreds of thousands of visitors over a three-day period this year for the Miramar Air Show.

The occasion offered a vast array of military and civilian performers, information, novelty and food booths, static military displays and much more. However, the show wouldn't have been possible if key personnel hadn't worked hard and burnt the midnight oil to see everything fall into place.

"There's a lot of people that work hard on the air show. They all have their own vital role," said Maj. Matt Ward, assistant airfield operations officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

Ward's office phone started ringing off the hook a month before the show and did not let up until all collaboration efforts were in place.

One of Ward's responsibilities was to coordinate with military performers. In addition to making sure they would arrive safely and on time, he needed to make sure everything they needed for the show's success was at their disposal. To make this happen, several units had to step up to some long and busy workdays—starting before dawn and ending well passed dusk.

"Long after everyone is done, my people (were) getting ready for the next day," said Master Sgt. Ann S. Brown, transient chief, Visiting Aircraft Line, H&HS, MCAS Miramar.

Brown has done so many air shows she has lost count. Even with all her experience, each show still provides new challenges.

"This year, the Blue Angels did a show a week before the Miramar Air Show," said the Placentia, Calif., native. "Days before the show began, they were still missing personnel and aircraft, and had to turn back due to mechani-

cal problems."

In addition to coordination and support, there was the small matter of changing the atmosphere of Miramar's working flight line into a large military fair. All aircraft either became displays or were stowed or flown away.

Many squadrons couldn't just stop training during the show. To keep the mission going, many aircraft flew away to continue training, according to Ward.

Tom M. Smith, owner of a displayed MiG-15 jet, showed off his aircraft to spectators throughout the weekend. To get his static display to the show, Smith had to

use about 400 gallons of fuel. Originally, he bought the aircraft to restore and sell it, but realized quickly he could not sell it and has been doing air shows with the MiG-15 ever since.

"There are still people even today that haven't

seen this aircraft. I only know of five or six in the United States that fly," he said.

Sgt. Anthony D. Thompson, avionics technician, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, served food to flight line customers to raise money for his squadron.

"The prices are a little higher than normal, but it's for a good cause. It keeps our (Marine Corps Birthday) Ball tickets down. Events like this build unit camaraderie, and (this is) ten times better than working," said Thompson.

Irma J. Malabanan, marketing director, Marine Corps Community Services, MCAS Miramar, said "Everything (at the show) that was non-military was coordinated (by) or affiliated (with) MCCS."

MCCS has worked directly with the Marines every year, to ensure the air show becomes an award winning success. The preparation begins each year immediately after that year's show is over. While many Marines are savoring the end of the current show's rush, marketing advertises and begins coordination for the following year.

"Three months before the event date, things become hectic," said the San Diego native.

Many of the hundreds of thousands of annual air show visitors come from around the world to see the show. According to Malabanan, European and Asian air show enthusiasts call throughout the year for information about the upcoming air show.

**"There's a lot of people that work hard on the air show. They all have their own vital role"**

**Maj. Matt Ward  
Assistant Airfield Operations Officer**

## ACTIVITY

continued from page 2

In these next weeks leading to the election, all of us should strive to collect our thoughts and ideas and support the candidate of our choosing. At the same time, we should be particularly mindful of how we express ourselves, and who and what we represent. As members of the United States' "Force in Readiness," each of us should take comfort in the knowledge that this small sacrifice on our part ensures that everyone in our great nation can enjoy the freedom of speech for which our founding fathers shed their blood.

While the Department of Defense directive governs only uniformed servicemembers, The Hatch Act for Federal Employees similarly regulates the political activities of many civilian federal, state and local government employees. For more information, visit [www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm](http://www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm).

## EXERCISE

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are also there to educate and help them either gain or lose weight. "We can train people the right way to get the most out of their workout. Each body is different, so what works for one person may not work for another," she added.

"It's important to go to a professional for advice and not just listen to someone who looks good. That person may have improper technique. Their joints may be suffering. Train for the future. It's a lifestyle technique," she said.

Rodriguez is one of many personal trainers on station who offer free physical fitness programs for all military identification card holders. Although all of her services are available to active duty, she is usually only approached by retirees, dependents and Marines referred to a training program by their command.

"All you have to do is call or walk in for an appointment. We have three gyms and at least ten fitness trainers," she said. "We'll restructure according to demand. It's good to come in with a buddy for spotting, but ask a personal trainer for help. There's a lot we can do."

Pain may be weakness leaving the body, but with proper training and education about physical fitness, that pain does not have to last forever.

Miramar Movies

The Station Auditorium is located in building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies free of charge. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, contact 577-4143 or log on to [www.mccsmiramar.com](http://www.mccsmiramar.com).

**Today:**  
4:30 p.m. Paparazzi (PG-13)  
6:30 p.m. Cellular (PG-13)  
8:30 p.m. Anacondas: Hunt for the Blood Orchid (PG-13)

**Saturday:**  
6:30 p.m. The Cookout (PG-13)  
8:30 p.m. Hero (PG-13)

**Sunday:**  
1 p.m. Superbabies: Baby Geniuses 2 (PG)  
6:30 p.m. Suspect Zero (R)

**Wednesday:**  
6:30 p.m. Resident Evil: Apocalypse (R)

**Thursday:**  
2 p.m. Paparazzi (PG-13)

Presentations and time subject to change.

Paintball Persecution

All active duty servicemembers are invited to participate in the 2004 Paintball Persecution tournament Nov. 20 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Mr. Paintball in Escondido. Teams are limited to five players and one alternate. Teams may have one civilian. Entry is \$35 if you have your own gear, \$45 if you don't. For more information, call 577-6283.

Religious Services

The Chaplain's Office is located in building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain's Office at 577-1333.

**Sunday:**  
9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service  
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist  
**Wednesday:**  
7 p.m. Baptist service  
**Monday-Friday:**  
11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass  
**Jewish:**  
7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD  
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

Super Bowl raffle

Until Dec. 5, any time you visit a Marine Corps Community Services club or restaurant, you will be eligible to enter a raffle for a chance to win a four-day, three-night all-expense paid trip for two to Jacksonville, Fla., to attend Super Bowl XXXIX. Entry forms can be picked up at the officer, staff noncommissioned officer, and enlisted clubs.

FTAP 2005 survey

All FTAP 2005 Marines are required to complete an EAS online survey. The survey is at [lnweb.manpower.usmc.mil/fteas/survey](http://lnweb.manpower.usmc.mil/fteas/survey). The survey is easy to use and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Buick Invitational

The Century Club of San Diego is inviting all active duty military and family members to the Buick Invitational Golf Tournament at Torrey Pines Golf Course, Jan. 17-23. Military and family members will need to show their ID cards for free entrance. For more information, call (858) 281-4653 ext. 307.

USO events

The USO will hold a free Navy Band Southwest concert Dec. 5 at 2 p.m. at the San Diego Civic Theater and the annual Toys for Tots 8K and 5K Run/Walk at MCAS Miramar Dec. 11. Awards will be given. For more information, call (619) 235-6503.

Impounded Vehicles

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information contact the Provost Marshal's Office at 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:	Vehicle:	License:
Green 1995 Dodge Neon	CA/3KGZ374	Blue Mazda 626	CA/1STD385
Blue 1989 Subaru GL	CA/1REE135	Blue Ford Escort	CA/3EKK843
Red Honda Prelude	NONE	Red Honda DX	CA/2YBS381
Red Sea King Boat	NONE	Blue Ford Mustang	CA/2TAX992
White Hydra Sports Boat	FL/CZ639M	White Dodge Dart	CA/SUPX39
Black VW Jetta	NONE	Green Chevy Blazer	CA/TESCROW